

VZCZCXYZ0006  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKO #0090/01 0110241  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 110241Z JAN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0890  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1045  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2488  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0634  
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0528  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1938  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 8435  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 1168  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 5938  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 7113  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0650  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 7772  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000090

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/09/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [CE](#) [JA](#)  
SUBJECT: JAPANESE FRUSTRATED WITH SRI LANKANS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Joe Donovan for reasons 1.4(b)  
and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Japan is concerned by Sri Lanka's decision to withdraw from the cease-fire agreement it had with the LTTE, and was surprised and miffed by this move, since President Rajapaksa had only three weeks earlier personally assured Prime Minister Fukuda that his government agreed a political solution was necessary and that the conflict would not be solved through violence. Rajapaksa's December 8-11 visit to Japan had not gone as smoothly as the Japanese would have liked. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Japan is "deeply concerned" and was surprised by the decision of the government of Sri Lanka to withdraw from the 2002 cease-fire agreement with the LTTE, according to an official MOFA press release and MOFA Southwest Asia Division Principal Deputy Director Masaki Ishikawa. Ishikawa told an Embassy Tokyo Political Officer Japan's displeasure with Colombo's move was exacerbated by the fact that President Mahinda Rajapaksa, during an official working visit to Japan only a few weeks earlier, assured Prime Minister Fukuda and members of the Diet that his government was committed to a political solution and believed the use of force was not an alternative. Japan continues to strongly believe that the conflict in Sri Lanka cannot be solved by military means, and calls on the parties to reach a solution by political means through negotiation. Ishikawa said Japan will remain committed to working on the peace process with the co-chairs of the Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and Development in Sri Lanka and is thinking of dispatching its special envoy, Yasushi Akashi, to Colombo next week to see what can be done to encourage a restoration of the cease-fire agreement.

¶3. (C) Rajapaksa's visit to Tokyo took place December 8-11 and was the first visit by a Sri Lankan president to Japan since 1996. Sri Lankan Embassy First Secretary Chandana Weerasena reported his government had been trying for two years to arrange the visit, which it considered very important given Japan's status as Sri Lanka's leading bilateral donor. Sri Lanka also attaches great importance to the role Akashi has played in the peace process, he added. Despite the importance attached to the visit, the Japanese side was not pleased by what it considered to be haphazard planning. Ishikawa complained that only one week before his arrival, and after the Japanese thought the itinerary for the

visit was set, Rajapaksa announced that he also wanted to visit Buddhist sites in Kyoto, which required a last minute flurry of activity by the Japanese. In addition, the Japanese were not pleased that a Joint Statement could not be released following the summit because the Sri Lankan side insisted on including reference to development assistance packages that have not yet been fully negotiated, as well as language about the LTTE that Tokyo considered too provocative. Ishikawa related how, after midnight the night following Rajapaksa's meeting with PM Fukuda, the Sri Lankans finally said they would agree to Japan's language, but by then it was too late. The Japanese had already briefed the press on the meeting and it would have raised questions to issue a Joint Statement after the fact.

14. (U) The main topics discussed by President Rajapaksa and PM Fukuda during their meeting were the peace process and human rights in Sri Lanka, bilateral relations (including economic and cultural/human exchange relations), and international issues, including climate change, North Korea, and U.N. Security Council reform. On the peace process, Fukuda stressed Japan's view that achieving peace in Sri Lanka is essential for promoting further bilateral relations and that it is important to achieve peace through negotiations, rather than by using force. He also stressed the importance of developing a devolution package to serve as the basis for political dialogue. Rajapaksa responded that work was moving forward on the devolution package and that his government was committed to a political solution, agreeing with Fukuda that the use of force was not an alternative. He further stated that his government was ready to hold talks with the LTTE if they would participate in a faithful manner. Fukuda also pressed Rajapaksa for progress on the human rights front, to which the president replied efforts were under way to establish a human rights investigation commission. Fukuda elicited Rajapaksa's support for Japan's "Cool Earth 50" initiative, support for Japan's position on the North Korea abductions issue, and support for Japan's effort to obtain a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

15. (C) In addition to his meeting with Fukuda, the president also was received by the Emperor and Empress and was called on by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, and Land, Infrastructure and Transport. According to Ishikawa and an official MOFA press release, Foreign Minister Koumura discussed the same topics touched upon by PM Fukuda, and that Rajapaksa "said that he was confident that using force would not settle the conflict..." in his country. In addition, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Chadrasekara Rohitha Bandara Bogollagama, who accompanied Rajapaksa to Tokyo, told the press that his country would "shortly" announce a political proposal to settle the nation's ethnic conflict as discussions by the committee dealing with the issue had reached a final stage.

16. (C) COMMENT: Ishikawa told an Embassy Tokyo Political Officer that following Sri Lanka's announcement of the end of the cease-fire, he had carefully reviewed Rajapaksa's remarks during his meetings and to the press in Tokyo, and had to concede that perhaps the president had never "promised" or "committed" to solely pursue a political solution. However, Ishikawa maintained that the tenor of all discussions had certainly implied Rajapaksa was committed to a political course of action and that his decision to abrogate the cease-fire had therefore surprised and disappointed the Japanese. Despite this, it is likely Japan will remain engaged with Colombo, both through continued economic assistance packages and the political involvement of Special Representative Akashi.

DONOVAN